

UCCS Faculty Guidelines around Return to Campus in Fall 2021 Faculty Assembly, Spring 2021

This document is intended to be used as a guide for faculty and campus leadership as faculty return to teaching in-person **in Fall of 2021** after a year of remote or non-traditional instruction mode teaching due to COVID 19 precautions. The document is intended for use only in the fall. This document has had input from the following faculty assembly groups: Budget Advisory, PRIDE, EPUS, Personnel and Benefits, FA Women's committee.

Perspectives from the Faculty on Returning to Campus In-Person

- The majority of faculty support that vaccination should be required of all faculty, students and staff.
- According to the faculty survey, some faculty report that they would like students to continue to wear masks in the classroom in the fall if everyone is not vaccinated
- The campus should make every effort to make the COVID vaccine available to our students before the fall 2021 semester starts, and during the semester if they choose to take it. We understand that this effort is already underway and continuing.
- While many faculty believe that we should all endeavor to teach in-person as much as possible in the fall, we believe that **all** faculty, including IRC faculty and lecturers, should be able to work remotely if they choose to *during Fall 2021*. *At a minimum, any requirements to be on campus should apply to all ranks of faculty equally.*
- Faculty members who choose to avoid campus for Fall 2021 (or until vaccination is required) should not be stigmatized or penalized in terms of evaluation or promotion.
- Faculty should be available for teaching, office hours, advising, department and other required meetings, and their other faculty responsibilities either in-person or remotely
- Faculty should have some amount of flexibility regarding their course instruction mode within reason, but the instruction mode should not change during the semester except for health reasons. The important point is to make it clear to the students up front what the expectations are.
- Many department and committee chairs report that it's extremely difficult to schedule meetings with faculty who do not keep an outlook calendar, which results in multiple emails back and forth slowing down campus productivity. Therefore, we recommend that faculty keep an updated outlook calendar. This should help make the transition back to campus smoother and increase productivity.
- Faculty should have strong support for their teaching, scholarship and research, and service from college and campus leadership that reflects the current public health conditions.

What worked and what did not in 2020

- Work life balance often didn't work well during 2020-2021 for many faculty.
- In many cases, faculty research productivity was hurt by having to revise their courses.
- The additional workload required of most faculty and staff during the 2020-2021 academic year often impacted personal time. Such expectations should not be continued during the 2021-2022 academic year.
- Most faculty and staff accepted additional service responsibilities during the 2020-2021 academic year, and this is unsustainable.
- Faculty also noted that they had to take on increased "student care" that might have included counseling, consoling or otherwise assisting students, and that work is also unsustainable at that level.
- IT did a great job of refitting many classrooms to be HyFlex. Faculty note that this work needs to be expanded.
- Remote Synchronous learning met with some measure of success; Remote Asynchronous tended to be more challenging for students.
- FRC , Faculty Mentors, and educational technologists across campus were leveraged to help faculty reimagine and implement new learning spaces to meet the challenges of remote learning
- Faculty revised their approach to their professional obligations including generating revising research and outreach communication, and mastering new technology in and outside of the classroom.
- Many faculty members committed themselves to providing the highest quality remote instruction with little time. Faculty also supported one another in these efforts.

Recommendations for fall 2021

Interacting with Students Virtually

- Faculty should establish response parameters for email, teams or other online methods of interacting with their students in their own courses at the start of the semester. This may include indicating to students that email will be responded to within a declared timeframe (e.g., 24 hours, 48 hours, by Monday night if sent on the weekend, etc.). Some faculty may choose to indicate to students that they will not respond to email during the evening or weekends. Others may indicate that they are always available to students (or within reason).
- Expectations about and the time and manner of live availability should be made clear to all students in a manner that encourages student-faculty interaction.
- A well-organized Canvas page can facilitate student-faculty interaction, especially in providing common resources and information. The FRC may be helpful in guidance regarding how to organize your Canvas course.
- Use of campus-supported tools like Outlook and Teams or Zoom can make it easier for students to communicate with faculty remotely.

- Faculty and staff should not be expected to work outside their contractual obligations.

Teaching

- Faculty have autonomy in their course pedagogy. For example, faculty should be able to require students attend in-person if the class is in-person.
- We recommend that faculty choose the teaching mode that works best for them pedagogically which may include in-person, HyFlex, remote asynchronous, remote synchronous, online, hybrid, or blended. Before the semester starts the faculty should indicate to their students (e.g., Canvas announcement, email, etc.) what the mode is and how it will work for their course.
- For faculty teaching HyFlex we recommend that they use technology available in their classrooms to include students who are taking the course remotely. Of course, faculty decide what works best for them in their course.
- Mid-semester evaluations are encouraged as a chance to adjust to student needs and feedback.
- We recommend that faculty follow whatever guidance there is from the campus regarding COVID 19 health and safety, but note that some faculty would like to require their students to wear a face covering during their in-person classes in the fall.
- All faculty should have posted office hours for students both on their office door, but also on Canvas.
- Faculty should not be requiring work to be done by students, or due, over breaks such as thanksgiving break.

Research

- The Office of Research, and Colleges (to the extent possible) should consider providing additional **internal grants** to help faculty who have had lower productivity due to the COVID 19 year hire graduate students, undergraduate students, and have stipends for their research and scholarly work for the PI, as well as supplies such as technology, glassware, chemicals, books, etc.
- Colleges should consider giving some faculty **offloads** for research to improve their research productivity.
- Colleges should consider allowing untenured faculty **a junior sabbatical before tenure**, and after comprehensive review, if possible.
- Colleges should consider rewarding faculty who have had a large number of student credit hours generated for student research or scholarly work with students over a certain period of time (maybe for a three year average) **to have a teaching or service offload**, as appropriate for their college and department.

- We support faculty arranging their teaching and service schedule to allow them to have blocks of time that are for research use only, and where only that activity is focused on to improve productivity. This may include mornings or full days devoted to research, as needed.
- Annual merit reviews regarding teaching research and service should continue to incorporate the impact of COVID at least over the next year if not the next 3-5 years.

Service

- We recommend that tenure track faculty reduce service, if possible, so that tenure track faculty can spend more time doing research and scholarly work.
- Faculty are discouraged from a large amount of service in their first year at UCCS, so tenured and full professors should spend more time doing service this fall.

Meetings

- We recommend that all meeting rooms be fitted so that faculty can meet both in person and remotely for the same meeting
 - OIT is working on a plan to outfit conference rooms and seminar rooms with HyFlex, but that will not be done by fall.
- We also recommend that faculty be able to choose what format to join meetings with, whether it's virtually, or in-person.
- We recommend that no meetings occur over campus breaks or holidays that regular faculty are required or expected to attend.

Office Use

- Departments should allow faculty who share an office to implement whatever COVID 19 guidelines the campus recommends.
- Faculty who share an office may schedule their office use so that is safest for health and safety.